

The Understanding and Treatment of Common Psoriasis in Chinese Medicine

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Abstract: Psoriasis is a chronic, recurrent inflammatory skin disease that can develop in all ages and genders and is one of the most common clinical skin diseases. The skin lesions are based on erythema, papules and scaling and are classified as common, arthritic, erythrodermic and pustular. Chinese medicine has a unique understanding of psoriasis, both in terms of its etiology and mechanism and in terms of its treatment. This article discusses the etiology, clinical manifestations, and treatment of common psoriasis.

Psoriasis has been documented in China since long ago, and ancient names for diseases that approximate the characteristics of psoriasis include white mange, snake lice, pine skin ringworm, silver money madness and dry ringworm. Psoriasis vulgaris is the most common type of psoriasis, with an incidence rate of over 90% compared to other types. It has a long course, is prone to recurrent attacks, and is not easily curable, seriously affecting the physical and mental health of patients. The general idea (See Figure 1).

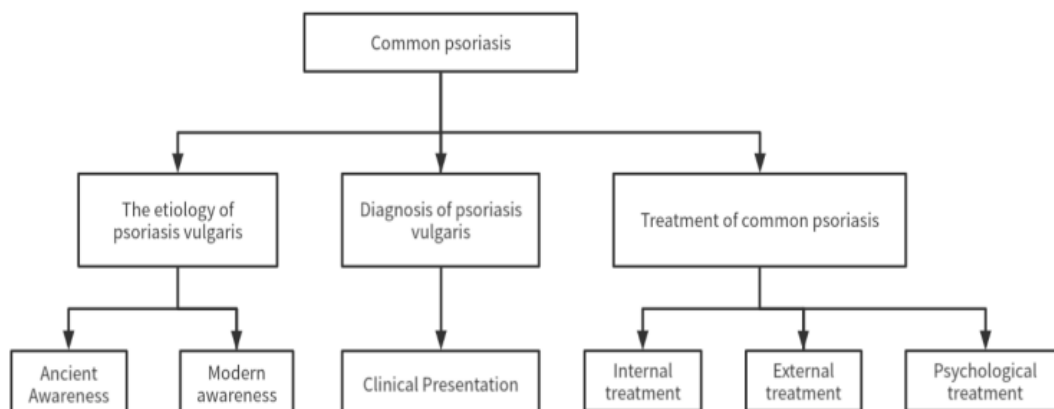


Figure 1: General idea.

1. The Etiology of Psoriasis Vulgaris

The understanding of ancient Chinese physicians on the etiology of the disease can be described as an upward spiral from the Sui and Tang dynasties to the Ming and Qing dynasties [1]. Before the Ming Dynasty, some doctors believed that the disease was mainly caused by external causes, with wind, cold, dampness and insects being the main causes of its onset. In the Sui and Tang dynasties, the "Treatise on the Origin of Diseases" recorded that "dry ringworm, but with Kuang Guo So no juice which is also dry, ringworm", already had the academic idea that internal and external causes cause the disease, as well as the pathogenesis view that external causes play a major role in the pathogenesis[2], and then in the Tang dynasty, medical practitioners continued this ideological view. In addition to inheriting the views of their predecessors in terms of the cause of the disease, the Song dynasty doctors also developed further in terms of the pathogenesis of the disease, and more clearly put forward the view that "qi and blood are not astringent". It developed into the Ming and Qing dynasties with a different and new twist, and most medical practitioners believed that the disease was the result of a combination of internal and external causes [3]. The external factors are mainly wind, heat, dampness and insects, while the internal factors are mainly blood dryness and blood deficiency. Some medical practitioners believe that the disease is caused externally by "the wind evil visiting the skin" and internally by "the dryness of the blood that cannot nourish it". During the Qing Dynasty, the disease was externally caused by "the evil of wind and dampness attacking the hairy orifices" and internally caused by "blood deficiency unable to nourish the skin", and was associated with autumn dryness. The "Complete Book of Surgical Evidence" has a description of "white mange, a mange wind. Because of too much gold in the year, to dry gold in the autumn to use the matter it is obtained, with this evidence most suffer from blood deficiency, body thin people". From the above, it can be seen that this disease is caused by the external causes of wind, cold and dampness and the internal causes of blood deficiency and blood dryness. It is only due to the different times in which they lived that the emphasis of the healers' claims differed.

The importance of blood in the development of psoriasis has been widely recognised by modern Chinese medicine practitioners regarding the etiology of the disease. Most studies have considered psoriasis from the standpoint of blood heat, blood dryness, blood deficiency and blood stasis, in addition to blood toxicity, which has also been included [4]. Professor Zhao Bingnan is one of the leading doctors in the field of blood heat. He believes that the movement of Qi is impeded by emotional changes, and that depression turns into fire, and that poisonous heat is hidden in the blood and Ying, or due to a poor diet, the spleen and stomach malfunction, and Qi is not flowing smoothly, turning into fire after a long time. Later on, the onset of the disease is due to the combined effects of wind and heat on the skin. If the disease progresses over a long period of time with repeated attacks, there will be a loss of harmony between Qi and Blood, depletion of Yin and Blood, dryness and wind or blockage of the meridians, condensation of Qi and Blood, and loss of skin nourishment these can all cause the disease to occur [5]. According to Prof. Jin Qifeng, this is mostly due to internal injury caused by emotions, excessive consumption of fishy, spicy and thick flavours, which affects the spleen's ability to transport and transform, and the development of dampness and heat from within, as well as external wind, heat and dryness, resulting in a combination of internal and external evils blocking the skin. It is divided into Blood-Heat and Blood-Dry, with Blood-Heat in the progressive phase and Blood-Dry in the stationary phase. According to Prof. Qin Wanzhang, it is blood-based, blood-heat first, blood-deficiency, blood-dryness and blood-cold second, blood-toxicity is the malignant development of the disease, and blood-stasis accompanies the disease throughout its development. Professor Gu Bohua believes that it is caused by a deficiency of the blood and the skin. Early on, the evil of wind, cold, dampness, and heat attack the skin, resulting in a loss of harmony between the body's battalion and the body's

guard and a lack of smooth flow of qi and blood, which is blocked in the skin[6]. A comparison of the ideas of the four healers(See Table 1). Other scholars have also changed the direction of thinking about the pathogenesis of psoriasis from the aspect of the Xuan Fu, suggesting that "the Xuan Fu is depressed and closed, and heat and toxins are contained" is the core pathogenesis of psoriasis [7].

Table 1: Contrasting Ideas.

Healers	Ideas
Zhao Bingnan	Blood fever
Jin Qifeng	Emotion and diet
Qin Wanzhang	Blood as the basis
Gu Bohua	Deficiency of blood and nutrition

2. Diagnosis of Psoriasis Vulgaris

Psoriasis vulgaris can account for up to 90% of psoriasis, and several other types can develop from the common type. The initial lesion is a red papule or epidermal rash, which gradually develops into a red plaque with clear and distinct borders, covered with multiple layers of silvery white scales on top of the erythema. The skin lesions can be punctate, oyster-shell, follicular, map-like, discoid or coin-shaped[8] and are more common on the head and extremities, particularly the elbows, knees and sacrococcygeal area, often showing a symmetrical distribution, which can spread around the body or only on one part of the body. When it occurs on the head, the lesions are well defined and the hair behaves in tufts, but does not cause hair loss. If it occurs on the extremities and affects the finger (toe) nails, the nail surface may appear "thimble-like" or bumpy, the nail surface may change its lustre, thicken and become greyish-yellow, and in severe cases the nail plate may detach from the nail bed. The disease is slow and difficult to treat and tends to recur. Some patients have seasonal manifestations, with the disease being heavier than usual in winter and lessening or subsiding in summer. Some patients who are well treated may also experience a prolonged absence of attacks after clinical recovery.

3. Treatment of Common Psoriasis

3.1. Internal Treatment

Internal treatment is the main point of Chinese medicine in treating skin diseases, which provides the rationale for the use of internal treatment for skin diseases. The holistic view has been a part of Chinese medicine culture for thousands of years, and the idea that the human body is an organic whole provides the basis for treatment in Chinese medicine, and the treatment of the outside must be based on the inside. Traditional Chinese internal medicine consists of two forms: decoction of Chinese herbal soup and oral administration of proprietary Chinese medicines." The rule of thumb for the treatment of psoriasis vulgaris is to identify blood and treat it in terms of blood, Blood-heat, blood-dryness and blood-stasis are the basic types of symptoms, The disease is usually characterized by blood heat in the early stage of the disease, blood dryness in the middle stage, recurrent attacks, and blood stasis after a long period of time(See Table 2). The blood-heat pattern is the most common pattern, and treatment is mostly based on clearing heat and cooling the blood to detoxify it [9]. Studies have shown that the incidence is higher in adolescents, and because adolescents have a strong constitution and are not afraid of cold medicines, the use of Cool Blood and Four Elements Tang combined with Sheng Di Yu Tang for external cleansing has been shown to be more effective [10]. Some physicians have used the efficacy of Expelling Yin Soup to clear

heat and cool the blood, to promote blood circulation, and to detoxify and remove blood stasis to treat this condition, Some patients were also selected for observation, advised to take care of skin cleanliness and to observe changes in the skin, and after 2 months of treatment, the overall effectiveness of the treatment was found to be over 90% [11]. The efficacy of the combination of Qing Ying Tang formula and AviA capsule in treating the blood-heat syndrome of psoriasis vulgaris has also been clearly demonstrated. AviA capsule is a first-line drug in the treatment of psoriasis, without bone marrow suppression or hepatic or renal toxicity, and can be used for a longer period of time than other drugs. The effect is significantly better when combined with Qing Ying Tang formula granules than with Aviagen capsules alone [12]. The main treatment for blood dryness is to nourish the blood, moisten and detoxify it. Blood deficiency and yin deficiency can both cause blood dryness, so products that nourish the blood and moisten yin are often used. Professor Ye Jianzhou has received good results in the treatment of dryness of blood with the use of the formula: Radix Rehmanniae, Radix Rhizoma Ginseng and Radix Macrocephala to increase fluid and moisten dryness, Radix Rhizoma Buffalo to clear heat and cool the blood, Radix Panax not ginseng to clear heat and detoxify the blood, Salviae Miltiorrhizae to nourish the blood and invigorate it, Radix et Rhizoma Kunmingensis to have immunomodulatory effects, and Ocimum sanctum to stop itching[13]. The main treatment for blood stasis is to invigorate the blood, remove blood stasis and detoxify the toxins. The application of these drugs is based on the theory that "if Qi moves, Blood moves; if Qi stagnates, Blood stagnates". The commonly used formula is Blood Activating and Dispersing Blood Stasis and Eliminating Yin Tang. Zhang Xuebing et al. divided 100 patients into two groups and gave Peach-Hong Er Shao Tang and Avi A drug and then made a comparison and found that the effect of Peach-Hong Er Shao Tang had considerable advantages both in terms of skin damage and itching [14]. The dialectic of the internal organs is also essential to the treatment of psoriasis(See Table 3). Regarding the lung, Wang Jusheng starts from the relationship between the skin and the lung and the relationship between qi and blood and the lung, advocating the use of the method of promoting and clearing the lung, and adding some drugs related to promoting and clearing the lung to the treatment [15]. Regarding the spleen, malfunctioning of the spleen not only generates dampness and turbidity, but also causes imbalance of qi and blood, and the loss of balance of yin and yang in the body when external evil invades again[16]. Starting from the liver, we can de-stress the liver and regulate the emotions by adding and subtracting Zhuangyao San [17]. Professor Yang Wenxin used the traditional treatment method of pacifying the liver and quenching the wind to formulate the "Anti-mange Soup" (Shui Niu Jiao 30 g, Bai Mao Root 30 g, Tribulus Terrestris 30 g, Bitter Ginseng 15 g, Sheng Di Huang 15 g, Mudan Pi 15 g, Fang Feng 15 g, Bai Hua Shi Tong Cao 20 g, Xia Ku Cao 20 g, Cicada Cao 10 g), and proposed the therapy of treating emotions with emotions [18]. It is important to regulate the balance of yin and yang and expand the positive energy to reduce the recurrence of the disease. In addition to the above treatments, there are some practitioners who treat common psoriasis from the Xuanfu. This has led to the treatment method of "harmonizing Ying and Wei and promoting the Xuan Fu" [19]. "Nei Jing" has "Ying water together with the essence of gas , to follow the veins up and down, through the five viscera, contact six bowels also", "Ying" is transformed from water and grain essence in the human body between the five viscera and six bowels, in the meridians between the circulation, "Wei Qi, warm flesh, fill the skin, fat couples, the Division of opening and closing also", as early as the Qin and Han dynasties, there is an awareness of the importance of Ying Wei to human health. The Xuan Fu is the place where Qi, blood and fluids flow in and out, and the normal opening and closing of the Xuan Fu and the normal functioning of the body are interrelated. By harmonizing the Ying and Wei, the Xuan Fu method can draw the evil out of the body through sweating.

Table 2: "Blood is the main focus, and blood is the basis of treatment" contrast.

Certificate type	Treatment method	Formulas
Blood-Heat	Clearing heat and cooling the blood to detoxify the body	Cool the Blood, <u>Sifu Tang</u> combined with <u>Sheng Di Yu Tang</u>
Blood dryness	Nourishing the blood, moistening the dryness and detoxifying the toxins	Nourishing the blood, nourishing the Yin and moistening the dryness
Blood stasis evidence	Promoting blood circulation, removing blood stasis and removing toxins	Promoting Blood circulation, dispersing blood stasis and eliminating Yin Tang

Table 3: Visceral Dialectics.

Visceral Dialectics	Treatment method	Prescriptions
Lung	The method of promoting and clearing the lungs	Drugs related to the promotion and clearing of the lungs
Spleen	Strengthening the spleen and removing dampness	<u>Aromatization of turbidity</u> , plus reduction or combining <u>Pingshan</u> with <u>Fu Ling Pi Tang</u>
Liver	<u>De-stressing the liver</u> and regulating the emotions	Prosperity San plus or minus
Kidney	Balancing yin and yang and expanding positive energy	Spleen and Kidney tonics

3.2. External Treatment

External treatments can be divided into pharmacological and non-pharmacological forms of treatment. The famous physician Wu Shiji proposed in Theoretical Era that "the theory of external treatment is the theory of internal treatment, and the medicine of external treatment is also the medicine of internal treatment, the only difference being the method", while the transdermal absorption of drugs is the theoretical basis for their external application. External treatments such as rubbing, fumigation, soaking, bathing, sealing, fire needling, acupuncture and acupuncture all play a better role in the treatment of psoriasis vulgaris and are commonly used in clinical practice. There are many kinds of Chinese herbal medicines used in clinical practice for common psoriasis, most of which are used for clearing heat, such as Huang Lian and Qing Dai, and again for activating blood circulation and resolving blood stasis, such as Angelica sinensis, Salvia miltiorrhiza and Safflower, as well as insecticides and anti-itching medicines such as Dioscorea, Bai Xian Pi and Bitter Ginseng [20]. The following is a description of several common external treatments.

Rub-on therapy: for patients in the progressive, progressive, and recovery phases of the disease, with small, limited lesions [21]. Topical medications and dosage forms can be selected according to the form of the lesion and the disease mechanism. Ointments, ointments, and creams are often used, which not only have their specific efficacy, but also have the function of lubricating the skin, protecting the lesion, drying, and cleaning. Ointments such as Scutellaria ointment, compound Qing Dai ointment, and Pulian ointment are commonly used. Chinese herbal fumigation therapy: suitable for the quiescent, regressive phase of common psoriasis, where the range of lesion manifestations is

relatively obvious, but not for the acute phase to avoid secondary erythrodermia. Patients should avoid receiving treatment on an empty stomach or just after eating, in accordance with the normal eating pattern which is about 2 hours after a meal. It is advisable to hydrate before fumigation to prevent deficiency. It is a good idea to hydrate before fumigation to prevent deficiency. The use of drugs also varies from type to type. In the blood-heat type, the commonly used drugs are those that clear heat and cool the blood; in the blood-dry type, the commonly used drugs are those that nourish the blood and moisten itchiness; in the blood stasis type, the commonly used drugs are those that invigorate the blood and remove stasis; anti-itch drugs can be used in all three basic types. Herbal bath therapy: Herbal bath therapy involves bathing in a decocted remedy, which allows the medicine to pass through the skin of the body to exert similar effects to internal therapy [22]. This method can be used for all types of patients, but particular care should be taken when using it in blood heat cases. If the rash is bright red or progressing rapidly due to excessive heat toxicity, the herbal bath should not be used in order to avoid irritating it. Patients using this treatment are also not recommended to do so on an empty stomach, but it is recommended to wash away as much of the scale as possible during the bath to facilitate full absorption of the medication through the skin. The choice of medication is much the same as that for fumigation therapy. The bath also has other therapeutic effects, calming the patient, stopping itching, soothing, unblocking the body's couples and harmonising the qi and blood. Chinese herbal medicine (soaking): suitable for the progressive stage of psoriasis vulgaris. Fold sterilized gauze to a thickness of 6 to 8 layers, dip it into the herbal lotion, wring it out without dripping when using it, and then saturate the affected areas with skin lesions twice a day for 20 minutes at a time. Commonly used medications include Amaranthus, Goldenseal, Phellodendron, Huang Lian and Bitter Ginseng. Comparison of 4 external treatments (See Table 4).

Table 4: Comparison of external treatment methods

Treatment method	Corresponding period	Notes on use
Chinese herbal fumigation therapy	Resting period	Patients should avoid receiving treatment on an empty stomach or just after eating, in accordance with the normal eating pattern which is about 2 hours after a meal. It is advisable to hydrate before fumigation to prevent deficiency.
Chinese herbal bath therapy	Various periods	It calms, stops itching and soothes the patient, unblocks the body's couples and harmonizes the qi and blood.
Chinese herbal sweat therapy	In progress period	Fold sterilized gauze to a thickness of 6 to 8 layers, dip it into the herbal lotion, wring it out without dripping and then saturate the affected area with the skin lesion for 20 minutes twice a day.

3.3. Psychological Treatment of Common Psoriasis

Due to the high recurrence rate of common psoriasis and the long treatment time, skin damage and itching cause distress to patients and seriously affect their physical and mental health. It also

has a negative impact on treatment. As early as Nei Jing, "if the spirit is not advanced and the will is not cured, the disease cannot be cured" and "at that time the courageous person's qi will be ready, but the cowardly person will be sick", these descriptions reflect that psychotherapy is an integral part of the treatment of disease. Some studies have shown that the addition of music therapy to the treatment of psoriasis vulgaris reduces tension, relaxes the body and mind, puts the patient in an optimal therapeutic environment and improves the outcome of treatment. In clinical treatment, it has also been found that patients who have undergone psychological support and timely communication with health care professionals have better treatment outcomes than those who lack psychological support for communication. Therefore, the necessary psychological guidance should be given to patients with psoriasis vulgaris in clinical treatment to encourage them to build up confidence, reduce negative emotions and improve their quality of life. It is a win-win situation for both the patient and the doctor when the patient trusts the health care provider and establishes a good trust relationship to improve the outcome of treatment. In conclusion, psoriasis vulgaris is a relatively common and frequent disease in dermatology. It is caused by a combination of external and internal factors and tends to run in families. In ancient China, there were many treatises on this disease, both in terms of etiology and treatment, and later on, through the in-depth exploration and reflection of later generations of doctors, they continued to inherit and develop this disease, giving more profound and detailed descriptions, putting forward their own academic ideas and further developing and improving the treatment. Chinese medicine has certain advantages in the treatment of common psoriasis, with few side effects and high safety performance, and should be worthy of being promoted.

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